

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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#### **2013 Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery News Release 1** **Alaska Board of Fisheries Decisions on Kuskokwim Area Proposals**

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Bethel for salmon fishermen in the Kuskokwim Area.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) met in Anchorage from January 15-20, 2013. Proposals submitted to the board by the department, other agencies, and the public were heard and voted on.

At the meeting the department presented reports on Kuskokwim River stock status, Kuskokwim River king salmon escapement goal recommendations, and options for revising the amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence uses in the Kuskokwim Area.

The department recommended sustainable escapement goal (SEG) ranges for Kuskokwim River king salmon as follows:

65,000–120,000	Kuskokwim River drainagewide
4,100–7,500	Kwethluk River
4,800–8,800	Kogruklu River
1,800–3,300	George River

#### **Proposal Action Summary:**

**Proposal 104** – Customary and traditional subsistence uses of fish stocks and amounts necessary for subsistence uses. Review amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence salmon in the Kuskokwim Area. **Adopted; 6-0.**

The board finds the following amounts of fish are reasonably necessary for subsistence uses:

67,200–109,800	king salmon in the Kuskokwim River drainage;
41,200–116,400	chum salmon in the Kuskokwim River drainage;
32,200–58,700	sockeye salmon in the Kuskokwim River drainage;
27,400–57,600	coho salmon in the Kuskokwim River drainage;
500–2,000	pink salmon in the Kuskokwim River drainage;
6,900–17,000	salmon in Districts 4 and 5 combined; and
12,500–14,400	salmon in the remainder of the Kuskokwim Area.

**Proposal 105** – Update and clarify the *Kuskokwim River Salmon Rebuilding Management Plan*.  
**Amended language adopted; 6-0.**

Amendments to the *Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan* were jointly submitted from the department and Kuskokwim River stakeholders to the board prior to deliberations on proposal 105. The new Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan provides guidelines for managing the Kuskokwim River salmon fishery to meet escapement goals and the subsistence priority. The following are the major changes from the old management plan.

In the king salmon fishery, management will be based on preseason and inseason escapement projections.

When the projected escapement of king salmon is above the drainagewide escapement goal range, the subsistence fishery will be open seven days per week with unrestricted gillnet mesh size. The commercial and sport fisheries will be managed to provide harvest opportunity on surplus king salmon in excess of escapement and subsistence needs.

When the projected escapement is below the drainagewide escapement goal range; the sport, commercial, and subsistence king salmon fisheries will close.

When the projected escapement of king salmon is within the drainagewide escapement goal range harvest opportunity might be limited or liberalized depending on available surplus. To the extent practical, provide subsistence opportunity on surplus in excess of escapement needs with at least one fishing period per week. If there is a limited surplus, a fishing period may open during which king salmon may only be taken by individuals 60 years of age or older. When it is necessary to conserve king salmon, the subsistence fishery may be restricted to gillnets with 4-inch or less mesh until sockeye and chum salmon abundance exceeds king salmon abundance. Actions to conserve king salmon may be applied to the entire Kuskokwim River, its sections, or tributaries, consistent with harvest trends and variability in abundance of king salmon available for harvest as the run progresses upstream. Harvest opportunity may be provided in the commercial and sport fisheries on surplus king salmon in excess of escapement and subsistence needs.

The commercial fishery will be managed to ensure there is no significant impact on escapement or subsistence opportunity on salmon species harvested incidentally in the commercial fishery directed at other salmon species. When king salmon are abundant the commercial fishery will be managed conservatively to ensure escapement goals are achieved and reasonable opportunity for subsistence use is provided in consideration of harvest trends to maintain adequate abundance of king salmon available to subsistence users throughout the drainage. When the projected

escapement of king salmon is within the drainagewide escapement goal range the first commercial period may not occur until after June 23; only waters of Subdistrict 1-B may be opened during the first commercial period; and 72 hours must pass between the first Subdistrict 1-B opening and the first Subdistrict 1-A opening.

In the sport fishery, actions to conserve king salmon will be implemented when king salmon are present, consistent with migratory timing as the run progresses upstream.

**Proposal 106** – Kuskokwim River Salmon Rebuilding Management Plan and adopt Optimal Escapement Goals for king salmon. **No Action** based on adoption of amended language in proposal 105.

**Proposal 107** – Kuskokwim River king salmon possession limits. Allow subsistence taking of 10 or more king salmon in June only for drying and cold-smoke use in the Kuskokwim Area. **Failed; 0-6.**

**Proposal 108** – Subsistence fishing permits. Require a permit and reporting requirements for all subsistence-caught salmon transported out of the Kuskokwim Area. **Failed; 0-6.**

**Proposal 109** – Customary trade of subsistence-taken finfish. Allow for sale of subsistence-taken finfish in the Kuskokwim Area. **Failed; 0-6.**

**Proposal 110** – Gillnet specifications and operations. Remove the option for gillnet mesh to be up to 8 inches in District 1 of the Kuskokwim River. **Adopted; 6-0.**

**Proposal 111** –Close all sport fishing on Eek River. **Failed; 0-6.**

**Proposal 112** – Close all sport and commercial guide fisheries in the Kwethluk River from June 1 through July 25 and limit the size of gillnet gear used in the subsistence fishery to 4-inch or less mesh and no more than 60 feet in length. **Failed; 0-6.**

**Proposal 113** – Prohibit catch and release fishing for salmon on the Kanektok and Arolik Rivers. **Failed; 1-5.**

**Proposal 114** – Prohibit sport fishing on all salmon spawning beds on the Kanektok and Arolik River drainages. **Failed; 0-6.**

Any questions regarding these regulatory changes in the Kuskokwim Area can be directed to Travis Elison in Anchorage at 907-267-2379. When final regulations are published the department will provide further information to the public.

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